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Title:
Labour Day Message

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LABOR DAY MESSAGE FROM DON DUNSTAN

The most important event in South Australia this year was the defeat of an irresponsible Liberal Government and the return of the Labor Party to power. On behalf of the State I would like to thank the labor movement for all the support they gave in returning the Government to power. Without it the Labor Party could not have worked effectively.

The electoral redistribution means that the Liberals will never again be able to get into power with only 42% of the vote. Now the main obstacle is the Legislative Council. Mr. DeGaris has stated publicly that the LCL dominated Council knows better than the people. We must and we will break their hold on the democratic legislative processes of this State.

Now that we have a Labor Government, we are in a position that allows us to work for the labor movement in the most effective way possible. And thus we have already increased service pay and over-award payments for weekly-paid employees in Government Departments and the S.A. Railways. Before the improvements were made employees were receiving less than Government workers in other States or in private industry. We have redressed one aspect of the balance.

One of our main tasks is in Worker and Consumer protection. For instance, the Workers Compensation Act is currently being completely revised by the Government. The reforming Bill will be introduced into Parliament this year. Once again, we will lead the Commonwealth in social and industrial legislation.

Another area in which we have taken action: we knew that sick leave for weekly-paid Government employees was inadequate, and so we have doubled it from five working days (40 hours) to ten working days (80 hours) for each year of service.

One of the first moves we made in Government was to protect unionists in Government employ. We have reinstated preference to unionists in employment, and thus followed through one of the basic principles of the labor movement. One of the first of the anti-Labor actions of the Hall L.C.L. Government was to rescind this provision. Heads of Government Departments have now been instructed to give general preference to unionists over non-unionists.

Finally, Trades Hall. Negotiations for the building have been finalised and we can expect work to start on it soon. Better accommodation is absolutely essential, and I am delighted that the concluding of the contract was made possible by the support of the Government for the project.

It was important that we do this. Unionism is a vitally important activity in this society, and it is through the Labor Movement and union strength that policies of the Party are directed towards people and not self-interest.

DON DUNSTAN.